

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Marian Bell Fairchild, May 4, 1901

Volta Bureau, May 4, 1901. Dear Daidums: —

I was very much interested in your Pompeiian letter. You are evidently having a fine time in Italy and Sicily. Wish I could be with you. IF THE TEMPERATURE IS NOT TOO HIGH. Haven't time to write you a proper letter. I am stealing ten minutes from other matters to send you a few —

JOKES.

An Italian Count, the other day introduced his American heiress to a friend as his “finanee”. A very appropriate term by the by.

The Queen of Holland's latest remark to her husband: — “Is my crown on straight?”

Never take a 12.50 train, for it is ten to one if you catch it.

Why is a pretty girl like a mirror?

Because she is a good looking lass.

Heat travels faster than cold, because you can easily catch cold.

Why is a stick of candy like a horse?

The more you lick it the faster it goes.

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When a girl faints, why should you always bring more than one doctor? If she is not brought two she will die.

Why is an empty room like a room completely full of married people. Because there is not a single one in it.

Theatrical: — The best seats in the house? — the receipts.

What is the longest word in the English language?

The word “smiles”, because there is a mile between the first and last letters.

Why is it impossible for a fisherman to be generous?

Because his business makes him sell fish.

The following are items from my note book culled from the newspapers. They are not exactly jokes, but purport to be true occurrences: —

There was a flood in one of the rivers out west the other day, and the young school teacher had to wade through a foot of water to get to her school where she found thirteen little children assembled. She noticed that the water was rising and remembered that the school house was in a hollow, and determined at once to get assistance. She made the children promise not to leave the building, and then started for the neighboring farm house. She found the water, however, up to her waist and feared the school would be gone before she could get assistance. There was no one at the farm house, and the barn was empty excepting for a horse. 3 Without a moment's delay she seized the horse and a long rope and started for the school, which was then afloat. She swam the horse to the building — tied the rope to the door — and started the horse back to shore with the school house in tow. After a desperate struggle she reached the shore and tied the other end of the rope to a tree. Having tethered the school house she started off again for assistance and brought

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back the farmer and saved the children. People out west are wild over her now, and she can have as many husbands as she wants.

I have just sent a suicide item to Mr. Kennan, for I doubt whether he has in his collection a more curious cause of suicide.

The man concerned was shot in the Civil War, and had lost both legs beneath the knee. When he recovered consciousness after the amputations he was concerned about the disposal of his feet, but was unable to trace them. He could feel, he said, that something improper was being done with his feet. One heel was cold and the ball of the foot was hot and itching, but he could not relieve the sensation, for his foot was gone. Little by little the extraordinary sensations experienced — apparantly in the missing feet — drove him distracted and he committed suicide. He labored under the common delusion of ignorant people that he could feel what was done to his dead feet. The sensations, of course were real, but his friends thought him insane and did nothing to relieve him. They thought he was subject to delusions, whereas any doctor would have known that the sensations simply indicated pressure upon the nerves that had formerly led to the feet.

Probably some small abcess had formed somewhere in the stump of his leg and had his friends been more intelligent they would have placed him again in the Surgeon's care, and a slight operation would have relieved him of the difficulty. But ignorance coupled with superstition made his case seem a hopeless one and the poor fellow ended his misery by suicide.

Elsie has not been very well lately but seems better now. The doctor is keeping her in bed for a few days, more as a precaution than anything else.

I am going to take a cottage at Atlantic City for a month, and Bert and Elsie and my father and mother will come with me and stay with me there.

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I understand that my father has presented you with some stock or bonds that will bring you in an income — according to Bert — of about fifteen hundred dollars a year. He has given Elsie the same and has also presented property to others, to Aileen, Robbie, Balf Ker and others. I am seriously concerned about it. It is all right to give away the property, but it is not right that he should deprive himself of the income. Elsie, at suggestion, wrote to him accepting the stock, but wishing him to have the income during his life. This he has declined to accept. She has now written to Mrs. Bell asking her to accept the income during my father's life and expend it upon him. I think this is the best plan to do, and if your mother approves I should like you to do the same.

Your loving father Alexander Graham Bell